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Alcohol Brief Counseling In the U.S. Air Force

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Sue Scheddel, LCSW-C, CADAC

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT)

Program Manager

Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland

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Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention

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~~and Treatment (ADAPT) Program~~

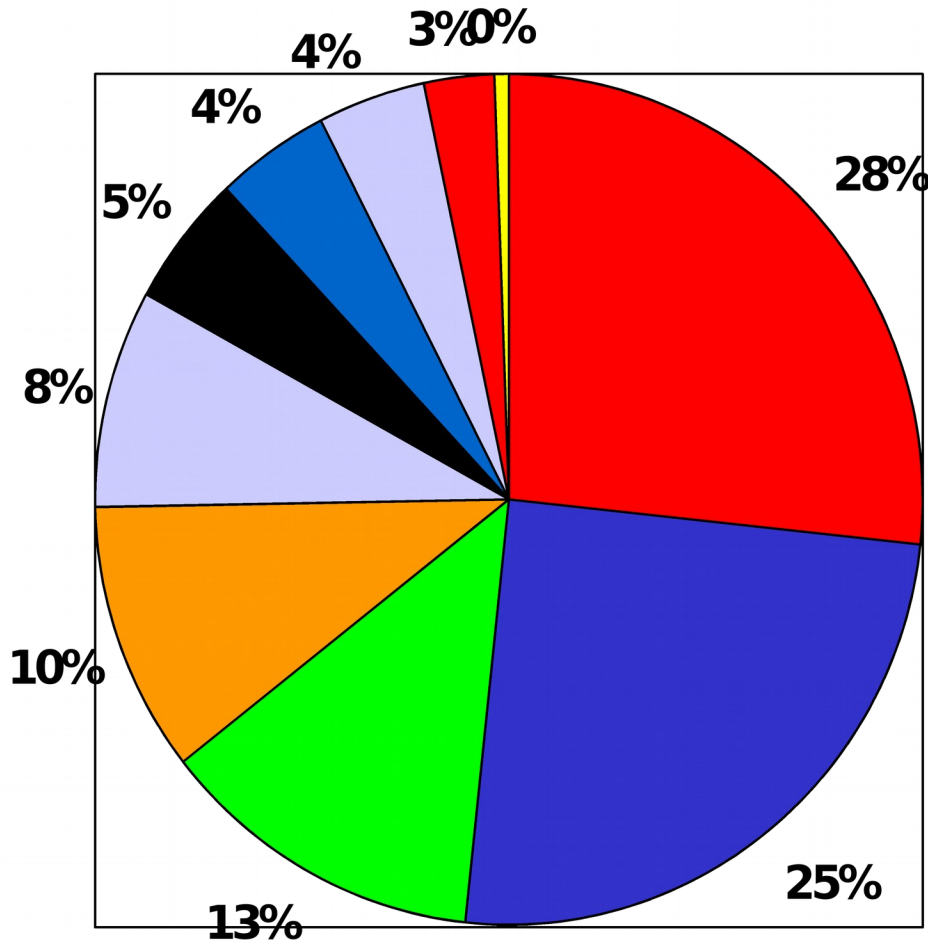
- **Part of mental health services at every base**
- **ADAPT Program Manager (typically psychologist or social worker)**
- **Certified Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors (mental health technicians)**
- **Mandatory referral for suspected substance abuse/dependence or substance-related misconduct**
 - **Secondary prevention if not diagnosed**
 - **Treatment if diagnosed. Level of care and treatment plan are developed according to American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria**



2007 USAF Alcohol-Related Misconduct (ARM)

Referrals to Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Programs

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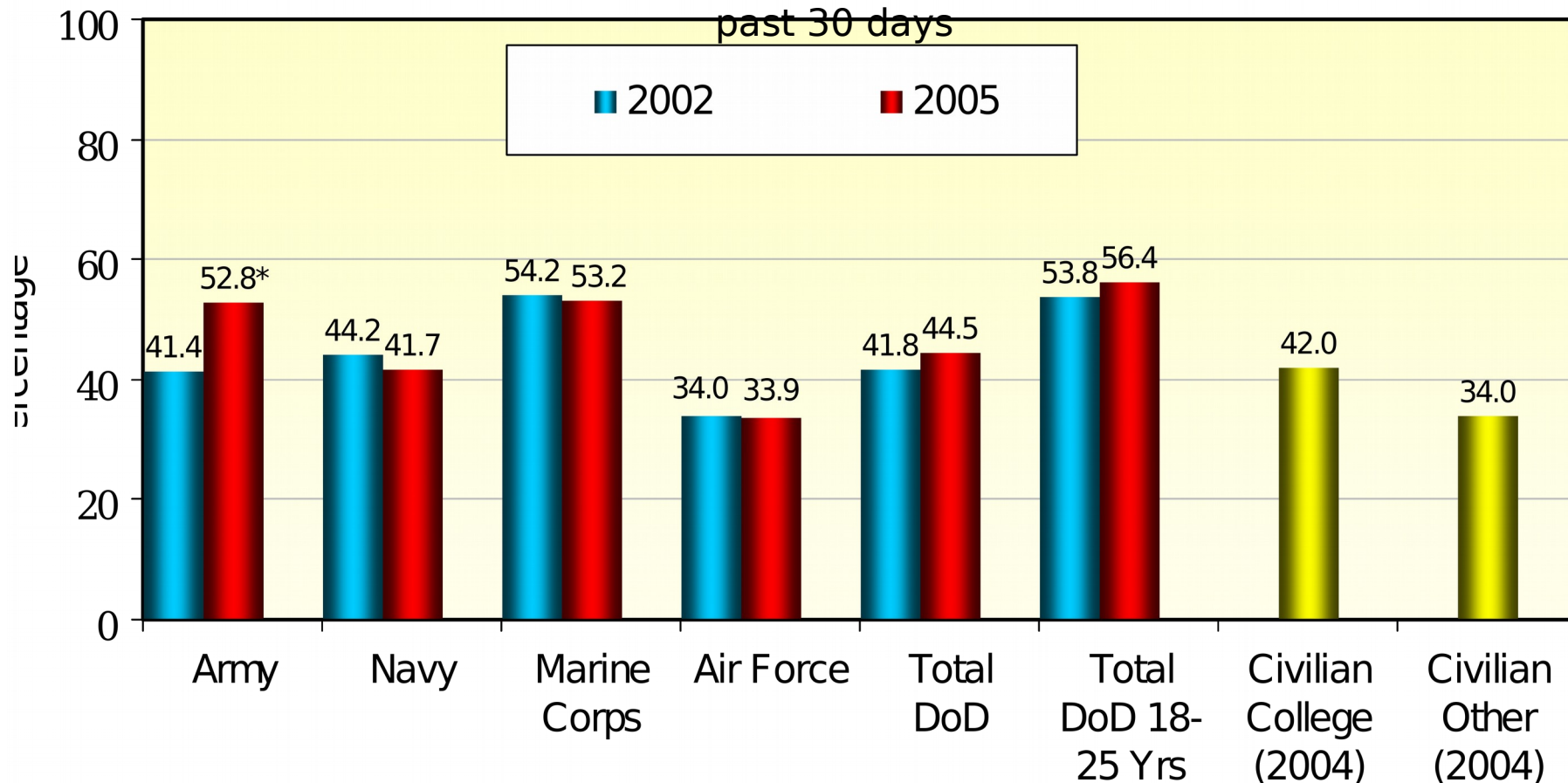


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Unadjusted Binge Drinking Rates by Service, 2002 - 2005

DoD Survey of Health Related Behaviors

Binge Drinking = 5 or more drinks on a single occasion at least once in the past 30 days



*Significant difference between 2002 and 2005 at .05 level.

Civilian estimate for 1-4 years past High School reported from Monitoring the Future, past 2 weeks, 2004.

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The Problem

Secondary Prevention previously provided a minimum 6-hours Substance Abuse Awareness Seminar (SAAS)

- **Perceived as a “Cookie Cutter”/ intervention was not clinically based/ information was not applicable to all**
- **Variation in group composition at times created counterproductive learning environment**
- **Complaints of lost personnel hours/productivity**
- **Overall no significant effect on reducing alcohol-related misconduct*******



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What does the literature say?

- **Alcohol Review “Mesa Grande”, Miller and Wilbourne, 2002**
 - 361 controlled studies-weighted on methodological strength
- **Strongest Efficacy:**
 - Brief Interventions
 - Social Skills Training
 - Community Reinforcement
 - Behavioral Contracting
 - Behavioral Marital Therapy
 - Opiate Antagonists (Naltrexone, Nalmefone) and Acamprosate
- **Least Efficacy:**
 - Education, Confrontation, Shock or Insight Driven Methods, Mandatory AA, etc...



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Brief Interventions

- **Effective - 2001 review of 56 studies**
 - **Non-treatment seeking populations**
- **Efficient - less resources necessary**
- **Flexible - can vary based on stage of change**
- **Developmentally (stage) appropriate**
 - **Raise doubts and awareness**
 - **Movement along stages of change**
- **Personalized**
- **If conducted carefully, minimizes counter-arguing**



Air Force Implementation

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- **A Working Group was formed consisting of Air Force and civilian subject matter experts**
- **The outcome was the development of Alcohol Brief Counseling (ABC)**
- **ABC is an evidence-based approach to secondary prevention that targets at-risk individuals**
- **Manual developed in 2006 based on existing programs from the Addictive Behavior Research Center, University of Washington**
- **Primary sources:**
 - **Dimeff, L. A., Baer, J. S., Kivlahan, D. R., & Marlatt, G. A. (1999) Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students: A Harm Reduction Approach. New York: Guilford Press**
 - **Addictive Behaviors Research Center, (1998). Alcohol Skills Training Program Counselors Manual. Unpublished manuscript, University of Washington**
- **Civilian Expert Consultant: John S. Baer, Ph.D**
- **Tailored for Air Force Use by: Brown C.J., Johnson, M.R., Previe, K.L., Hunter, C.M., Robinson, C.S., Scheddel, S.R. & Simmons, J.P.**



Alcohol Brief Counseling (ABC)

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- **Referral and collateral information received**
- **Standardized computer based Substance Use Assessment Tool (SUAT)**
- **Clinical intervention**
 - **Motivational Interviewing approach throughout**
 - **Tailored feedback reports for clinicians and clients (AUDIT, SADD, SIP, CEoA, RTQ, etc)**
 - **Change Plan / Prescription for Wellness**
- **Education / Brief Counseling**
 - **1 or more sessions variable based on risk**
 - **Education Toolkit written assignments without loss of duty time**



Alcohol Brief Counseling (ABC)

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- **Follow-up appointment(s) to accomplish the following tasks:**
 - **Reassess risk status**
 - **Review any items from the education that the client does not understand or would like to review or discuss**
 - **Assess progress on the Change Plan and revise the plan as needed**
 - **Determine need for further follow-up or resources**
- **Case closing by phone or in person (depending on risk) to reaffirm commitment to harm-reducing Change Plan and decide whether or not further targeted prevention services are needed**



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Motivational Interviewing (MI)

***Person-centered, directive
method of communication
for enhancing intrinsic
motivation to change by
exploring and resolving
ambivalence***

Source: Miller & Rollnick (2002)

***Core Techniques: Open-ended Questions; Affirm; Reflect;
Summarize***

Adapted from Walters, S. & Baer, J. *Talking with College Students about Alcohol: Motivational Strategies for Reducing Abuse*. 2006, Guilford Press.



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Elements of Brief Counseling

- **Feedback is presented to client (lab tests, surveys)**
- **Advice, clear and well timed, not pushed by the provider; avoid *direct persuasion***
- **Responsibility for change left with the patient; ambivalence is seen as normal**
- **Menu of options, alternatives, resources for how the client would address needed behavior change**
- **Empathy expressed by the counselor may be THE most critical component of brief approaches; *in the absence of empathy, change rarely occurs***

Source: Miller & Rollnick (2002)

- **Self-Efficacy is supported and promoted**



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Client Overall Satisfaction

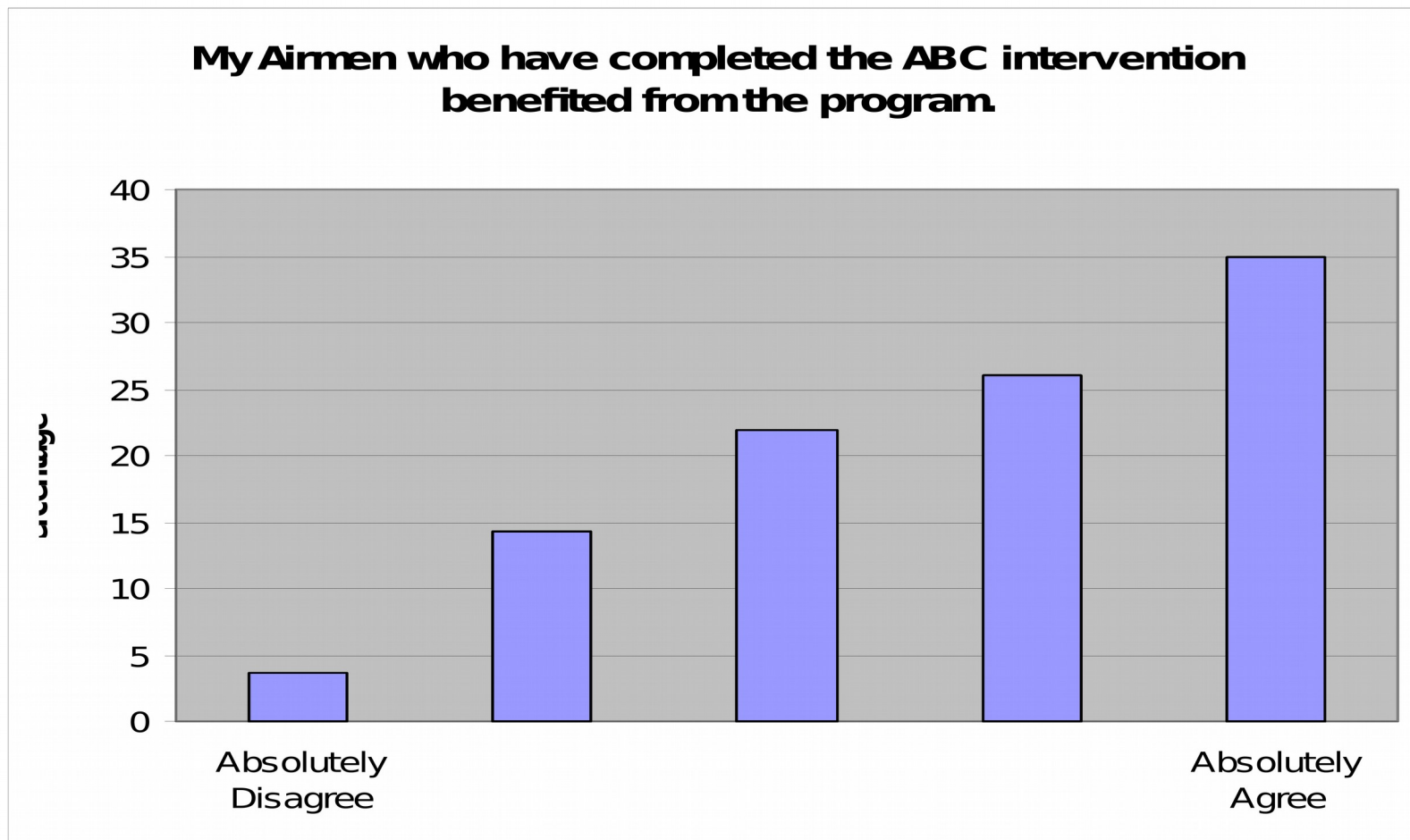


N = 405 clients



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Commander and First Sergeant Surveys: Perceived Benefit to their Airmen



N = 77



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ABC Implementation

- **Initial data for two pilot sites revealed an 88% average decrease in recidivism cases as compared to the prior year's SAAS**
 - **Fewer careers impacted adversely**
 - **Less drain on valuable clinical resources**
 - **More flexibility in scheduling/ mission needs**
 - **Higher satisfaction for counselors**
- **Air Force-wide policy in January 2008, and training was completed for all AF bases by Major Command during 2008**